

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 724

By McDonald

A RESOLUTION to honor Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church and its congregation upon the celebration of the church's 100th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the good people of Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church comprise one such estimable congregation that celebrated the church's 100th anniversary in August of 2009; and

WHEREAS, once a mission school and sanitarium, Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church survived two fires and a world war to become a church home for 750 people; and

WHEREAS, Highland Church was organized on August 7, 1909; and

WHEREAS, the Highland Adventist community started out as a unit of a similar venture in Madison; Highland's founder, Braden Mulford, moved to Madison from Michigan in 1904 with the founders there, prominent Adventist educators Edward A. Sutherland and Percy T. Magan, who sought to follow the counsels of Ellen G. White, one of the founders of Adventism, and wanted to reproduce Christianity as they had known it back in Battle Creek, Michigan; and

WHEREAS, at Madison, the founders created a farm and a sanitarium and encouraged their students to continue reproducing the Madison model of teaching agriculture and health; and

WHEREAS, Braden Mulford and Charles Alden took their teachers' words to heart and set out to make a mark on the Portland community, Mr. Braden by founding the Highland

Adventist community and Mr. Alden by serving as principal of Portland High School during the 1930s; and

WHEREAS, the two men initially started a school near Ridgetop, a venture which proved so successful that Braden Mulford set out on his own a year later; and

WHEREAS, what became a full-fledged elementary school and academy started out in the living room of the Mulfords, while a separate structure was completed for the school; and

WHEREAS, in 1909, the building was completed, and the Mulfords used the building for both their school and a church; and

WHEREAS, Adventist lay persons aimed at self-sufficiency in growing their own food, the founders wanted to educate local adults, and they held agricultural rallies on campus, attracting local farm families, and invited speakers from the State of Tennessee to give instruction in better agricultural methods; they also started a cannery to help teach people how to preserve their foods; and

WHEREAS, the founders further sought to meet medical and health needs in their community, and they opened a sanitarium in 1916; the original sanitarium burned in 1928, but it was quickly rebuilt with the support of the community; and

WHEREAS, hit hard by the Great Depression, the Mulfords left the community in 1937, and turned it over to the Martin and Dysinger families; and

WHEREAS, with the advent of World War II and the subsequent drafting of all male students into the Army, things came to a virtual standstill at Fountain Head Industrial School in 1945. At that time, the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference took over the operation and renamed the school "Highland Academy"; and

WHEREAS, the conference officials intended to close the sanitarium and invest their energies into the school, but community support and the efforts of two energetic young physicians, Dr. Albert Dittes and Dr. Reuben Johnson, kept the hospital alive and thriving for many years; and

WHEREAS, thanks to changes in the local economy, the church would eventually grow to be the second largest in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference; and

WHEREAS, as the greater Nashville area grew in the 1970s, the enhanced economy and positive school situation attracted many middle-class Adventist families; the congregation began making plans for a new building in 1977 and moved into its present quarters on March 1, 1980, with the membership topping 400; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the hospital was sold to a for-profit health care conglomerate; and

WHEREAS, the academy and elementary school remain the basis of the church membership, even though now most of the church members work off campus. Nearly half the students in the academy and all of the 100 students in the elementary school now live in the village; and

WHEREAS, today, the Highland Church membership stands at 750 as the church celebrates its 100th anniversary; and

WHEREAS, for a century, the congregation of Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church have made prominent contributions to the civic, educational, and social fabric of Portland and Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church is among those institutions upon which a just and orderly society is based; it is a focal point for our citizens to worship their Creator as a community of faith and from which they reach out to the secular community as a response to God's saving grace; and

WHEREAS, Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church is truly one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our state and nation, and the members of this exceptional congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church and its congregation upon the church's 100th anniversary, thank the good people of this historic congregation for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.